

JOHN MEARSHEIMER'S REALISM AND THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS

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Abstract. The paper sheds light on the ongoing debate around the Ukrainian war in American and Western scholarship, the focus is especially on John Mearsheimer's views on the Western perception and attitudes towards Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. An in-depth critical analysis of Mearsheimer's essay titled "*Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault*" published in the aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and his other works have shown that putting the blame on Putin and demonization of Russia for the Ukrainian crisis is a dominant and prevailing discourse in the West. In this ongoing debate, John Mearsheimer seeks to change such narratives viewing them as one-sided and biased, forcefully and persuasively arguing that the Western nations led by the United States are to blame for this international crisis that has led to military conflict in Ukraine. The prime cause of the Ukrainian conflict according to Mearsheimer, lies in the eastward expansion of NATO since the 1990s, which is seen by Russia as a grave threat to its national security. Another reason of why there is a bitter tension between the West and Russia is that the American and European leaders' beliefs of international politics are shaped and guided by a flawed view in which they tend to trivialize realism, contemporaneously subscribing to liberalism, a school in international relations theory that dominates the discourse about the Transatlantic security. Although Mearsheimer's realist stance and views about the Ukrainian war and European security do not constitute mainstream discourse in the West, they contribute to a proper understanding of this international crisis from the perspectives of realism.

Keywords: realism, liberalism, Mearsheimer, crisis, Ukraine, NATO, West, Russia

Introduction

The Ukrainian crisis that has been at the forefront of scholarly and media discussion for the last two decades has stirred up deep tensions and debates in the West, particularly in the US. The central question within the framework of this crisis lies in the nature of cultural and civilizational identity of Ukraine in the post-Cold War period. The disintegration of the Soviet empire and emergence of Ukraine as a sovereign political entity has brought about a deep tension between the West and Russia regarding the geopolitical status and identity of Ukraine. The question that arises is whether Ukraine should stay close to Russia maintaining its Eastern Slavic identity and prioritizing cooperation with Russia, or should it integrate itself into the European and Transatlantic cultural, political, economic, military and security system following Baltic and Eastern European nations. This critical issue on the one

hand has engendered a sharp division within the Ukrainian society which had already been fraught with the East-West divide. On the other hand, a deep cultural cleavage has caused a severe regional and international crisis that has drawn key global powers such as the US, the European Union and Russia. Overall Western public opinion, media, scholars, and political elites tend to overwhelmingly attribute the Ukrainian crisis to Russia's aggressive behavior, at the same time exempting themselves from responsibility and liability. Consequently, relationships between the West and Russia lack trust and are filled with suspicion, in which the former has grown increasingly distrustful of Russia's behavior and intention, making allegations that the Kremlin's agenda is to raise the Soviet empire from the dead. According to the prevalent and pervasive discourse in the West, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and backing separatists in southern and eastern Ukraine and the recent military aggression against this nation are obvious manifestations of the strategy aimed at restoring the Soviet empire. Moreover, the West remains deeply suspicious of Russia in the light of the war in Ukraine and the Kremlin's imperial agenda may not be confined to Ukraine as Baltic states and Eastern European nations may inevitably face Russian aggression as well.

Yet there is a small but powerful group of pundits in the West who do not buy the prevailing discourses about Ukraine and Russia's behavior, boldly challenging such one-sided narratives and providing compelling evidence and making forceful arguments. This paper specifically focuses on John Mearsheimer's realist views and assumptions about the international crisis in Ukraine and Russian policy towards this nation, breaking down his arguments and providing a critical analysis of his ideas, which entirely are critical of the Western discourses and narratives about this matter. Despite mistakenly being accused harshly in the Western media and academic circles of being an apologist for Putin and Russia, Mearsheimer's realist theories are considered a powerful analytical tool that can provide fresh insights into intricate aspects of international politics [1]. Furthermore, despite its shortcomings, a realist paradigm can provide compelling and sound arguments and explanations regarding power struggle in international relations [2]. In his essays Mearsheimer points to fallacies in reasoning and misconceptions about Western narratives and perceptions of the Ukrainian conflict and Russian policy, which have resulted in unanticipated and unforeseen outcomes detrimental to Ukraine and the West. The root cause of Western misjudgment and miscalculations is linked to Western adherence to erroneous and misleading views of international politics which have led to the deterioration of relationships with Russia and put the very existence of Ukraine as a sovereign state in jeopardy.

Description of Materials and Methods

After the demise of the Soviet empire, eastward expansion of NATO has been relentless and persistent that has generated a sharp reaction and objection from the Kremlin. The Russian political and military elites have painfully reacted to the enlargement of the alliance exhibiting fear and anxiety with each country joining NATO and with approaching its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders. Even though many predicted that with the end of the Cold War a bitter and hostile

relationship between Russia and the West would come to an end and a constructive cooperation between them would be established, it has been hard to overcome for both sides Cold War mentality. Although a new Russia and the West have sought to settle differences and establish relationships premised on win-win cooperation and peaceful coexistent, mutual suspicion between them has remained in place. Drawing on John Mearsheimer's essay "*Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault*" published in 2014 this paper seeks to understand and examine the ongoing Ukrainian conflict from the perspectives of political realism and liberalism in international relations theory. Besides the mainstream discourses about Ukraine in the West, there are counter-narratives and counterarguments that offer alternative and opposite views about the war in Ukraine, which chiefly offered by realists in the West such as Mearsheimer.

In the midst of the military conflict in Ukraine and hostility between Russia and West, we see not only regional and global power struggle between Moscow and Washington, but we are also witnessing unfolding ruthless information war and clash of discourses. In this case, the Western media, politicians, scholars and public have unleashed concerted attacks on Russia, demonizing and depicting it as an evil force, an axis of evil and laying blame on Russia for the war in Ukraine. It is evident that the West perceives itself as a benign force and as a bastion of democracy whereas seeing Russia as the major source of international confrontation and military conflict in Ukraine. To get a proper understanding of debates around Ukraine, we need to consider alternative views and perspectives suggested by Western scholars because the mainstream Western narratives are evidently biased and partisan. A critical analysis of the counter-narratives within the Western world will allow us to get different insights into the war in Ukraine. The crux of the alternative counter-narratives is that the Western behavior is perceived as the chief source of the war in Ukraine while the mainstream Western discourses tend to put the blame on Russia. Yet the key message that sent by counter-narratives is that it is wrong and unjust to see only Russia as a 'bad guy' because the Ukraine crisis is West's fault in the first place.

Results

While realists believe that international politics is premised on power struggle and geopolitical competition amongst great powers, liberals argue that states and other actors on global stage are driven by cooperation and adherence to rule of law and democracy rather than perpetual war [3]. In the Ukraine crisis, we see the contest between these two schools of thought in international relations theory in which whereas most realists have objected to the eastward enlargement of NATO forcefully advancing a belief that Russia does not need to be deterred, liberals have ardently encouraged expansion of NATO [4, 5, 6]. According to Mearsheimer, have liberals dominated not only the US political establishment since the 1990s they have also enjoyed a huge preponderance in the discourse about Euro-Atlantic security [7]. The dominance of liberals in foreign policy and decision-making process has allowed them to be a powerful driving force behind the eastward enlargement of NATO and expansion of the European Union. During the 1990s, key members of

the Clinton administration were liberals who pushed hard for NATO expansion who held the view that international and regional relations and security underwent profound changes and shifts with the end of the Cold War, which made old realist thought and realpolitik outdated, irrelevant and unnecessary for a new era [7].

Having objected to further expansion of NATO, realists have taken into consideration a wide range of variables in the assessment of new patterns and global order in the aftermath of the Cold War. Although the Cold War mentality was dominant and pervasive in the 1990s, realists in the West rightly assessed the military, political, economic and demographic capabilities of Russia. They claimed that even though Russia may remain a great power, it was not equal to the United States to say nothing of the rest of the West. In their analysis of Russia after 1991, they indicated certain weaknesses and drawbacks in Russian capacity, namely unlike the Soviet Union, that was a global power, today's Russia is a declining power with a weak economy and an aging population [7]. Consequently, there is little likelihood that Russia can pose an existential threat to European security unless the Kremlin is provoked to do so. NATO's eastward expansion and Western efforts to alienate Ukraine from Russia may induce Russian aggression and hostile action. As many realists warned during the 1990s, the very idea of enlargement of alliance into Eastern Europe was going to irritate Russia and its response would inevitably bring about lots of trouble in Europe. In addition to Mearsheimer, many realists, including George Kennan, who was the architect of the containment strategy of the Soviet expansion during the Cold War, unequivocally opposed any idea pertaining to NATO expansion.

As the Cold War warrior, George Kennan helped the US deter the Soviet expansion. In his 1998 interview, he made it crystal-clear that if NATO was going to expand into former socialist republics in Eastern Europe that would inevitably trigger a new cold war between the West and a new Russia, since Russia's reaction to enlargement would be deeply hostile and antagonistic [8]. Having assessed NATO's eastward expansion as a tragic mistake, George Kennan warned the American political elites and the Clinton administration that with end of the Cold War, America had no a formidable enemy like the Soviet empire any longer and the US had no necessary resources and intention to protect those nations in Eastern Europe. Kennan also warned that the reaction from Russia to the expansion of NATO would surely be aggressive, which in turn would let the West not only justify the need for enlargement of the alliance, but Russia's adverse behavior would be used to demonize and denigrate the Russians and their country [8].

The debate between these schools of thought in international relations theory have intensified with liberals getting the upper hand in fierce arguments over NATO expansion and a probable incorporation of Ukraine into the alliance as a member state. Mearsheimer maintains that in the United States as well as in NATO countries most liberals who occupied important positions in the government were in favor of enlargement positing that the end of the Cold War led to the erosion of the realist logic while the ascent of liberalism was in full swing [7]. Having convinced of American exceptionalism and benign hegemony, American leaders believed that the US could not be perceived as a threat to anybody as its efforts were directed towards

reshaping the world and remodeling Eastern European nations in the image of Western Europe.

As the Western political elites subscribed to the liberal logic, liberals dominated the discourse about Euro-Atlantic security that led to the situation in which the liberal worldview came to be seen as a dogma by Western political elites [7]. Even though the American political establishment tends to be increasingly hawkish and belligerent, they adhere to democracy and liberal ideas putting a special emphasis on spreading democratic values across the globe. In addition to the adherence to liberalism, American leadership believe that neoliberal order that emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War is growingly challenged and threatened by a conventional and older perspective of power [7]. For instance, former US president Barak Obama frequently drew attention to the fast-growing threats to Western democracy emanating from predominantly traditional autocratic societies. In the light of the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, John Kerry, US Secretary of State, echoed Obama's statement by saying that in this new century one should not misbehave like nations states did in the 19th century, violating sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries under false pretenses [9]. This kind of worldview is reflected in current American foreign policy and in its approach to European security. Yet Kerry's statement was criticized by American realist such as Stephen Walt, who stressed that the 19th century style great power behavior is displayed not only by Russia, but also by the United States [10].

Discussion

Mearsheimer's thesis. John Mearsheimer has been an outspoken critic of Washington's foreign policy for the last three decades claiming that the US behavior on international arena has destabilized international peace and order. In the Ukraine case, unlike other political scientists, Mearsheimer has not placed the blame solely on Russia but rather the Kremlin's misbehavior and invasion of Ukraine, Russian annexation of Crimea and backing up Russian separatists in eastern and southern regions of the country have primarily been caused by Western, notably American intervention. The crux of Mearsheimer's argument is that the root cause of the Ukrainian crisis and subsequent full-scale war is not Russia's aggressive behavior but rather Putin's hostile attitude towards Ukraine and West. He argues that in the West there is a fallacy in judgement that Russia is culpable for the Ukraine war and the Kremlin is not going to confine its aggression to this country as its strategic goal is to revive the Soviet Union. Russian aggression against Ukraine is the first step in putting this neo-imperial plan into effect and as soon as Ukraine is conquered, other former Soviet republics will face Russian aggression.

Yet Mearsheimer does not share such a view, claiming that it is not Russian behavior rather the US and its European allies are to blame for what is happening in Ukraine. In his opinion, the principal cause of Russian misbehavior and the Ukraine war lies in the eastward expansion of NATO that aims at eventually helping Ukraine distance itself from Russia and integrate itself into the Euro-Atlantic political, economic and security system. In addition to NATO enlargement, the European Union eastward expansion and Western export of liberal democracy contribute to

this international crisis. Over that past three decades the Russian political and military establishment has opposed and resisted NATO and EU eastward expansion viewing it as a hostile action directed against Russia and its national security. The West in turn has failed to take Russia's concerns regarding its national security issues caused by NATO expansion seriously, seeing Russian anxiety and objection as groundless and illogical. Mearsheimer asserts that the West's attempts to drag Ukraine into Western block through interference in domestic policy of Ukraine by ousting Viktor Yanukovich, a pro-Russian president, from power in 2014 sent a clear message to Moscow and was the last straw for Russia. That being the case, the Russian response to West's intervention in Ukraine and its overthrow of Yanukovich was harsh and instantaneous that triggered Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea. The Kremlin became deeply suspicious of the West's intention and concluded that had Ukraine been lost to the West, Russia would have put itself in jeopardy as Ukraine eventually would host NATO's military base on its territory.

From this standpoint, the Kremlin's aggressive behavior and violation of Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity should not be seen as a surprise or something unexpected [7]. In his view, Russia was provoked by West's unacceptable behavior and its interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs. The fundamental cause of Western blunder and miscalculations according to Mearsheimer, lies in the adherence of Western elites to fallacious and erroneous concepts of international politics, notably liberalism in theory of international relations [7]. Yet despite West's subscription to liberal views, current events on international arena clearly show that political realism remains pertinent in foreign policy.

Engineering the crisis. On the eve of the demise of the USSR, the Soviet leaders although agreed to the reunification of Germany, they strove to maintain a balance of power between the West and East by keeping NATO where it was at that time. Even though there was not any official deal signed between the West and the USSR regarding security status quo and NATO's possible enlargement, Russian politicians have repeatedly reiterated that there was a gentlemen's agreement between the US and the USSR/Russia that NATO would not move an inch towards east and none of former socialist countries would be allowed to join the alliance [11, 12]. Even if there was such a deal, it was after all a legally non-binding agreement and hence the West was not going to keep its promise. The US under the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations encouraged former socialist republics in Eastern and Southern Europe to incorporate themselves into NATO, including those of Baltic states. The process of NATO enlargement towards Russian borders has always been painful for Russian elites [13].

During the 2008 Bucharest summit of NATO the US suggested that Georgia and Ukraine should be acceded to NATO [14]. After encountering German and French objection to this proposal, member-states found a common ground that NATO would approve the right of Ukraine and Georgia to seek NATO membership [15]. Russia's reaction to this event was severe, whose leaders declared that Georgian and Ukrainian membership in NATO would be detrimental to pan-

European security and would pose a grave threat to Russia's security. During one of the meetings with George W. Bush Putin explicitly warned him that if Ukraine was allowed to join NATO, it would instantly cease to exist as a sovereign nation [7]. To justify Russian aggression against Ukraine Putin refers to Ukraine as a Nazi regime that like Nazi Germany ought to be destroyed. In addition to efforts to integrate Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic security system, the West has put a greater emphasis on the spread of democracy and liberal values in Ukraine funding pro-Western NGOs and opposition groups. The US policy makers have considered establishing a democratic Ukraine as the first step in democratization of former Soviet republics, including Russia. For that reason, as Mearsheimer points out, the Kremlin has made an attempt to avert the realization of this Western strategy [7].

That being so, Mearsheimer in his essay indicates three central factors have given rise to the Ukraine crisis, notably NATO expansion, EU enlargement and imposing democracy. From this perspective, he considers Yanukovich to have been a legitimate president of Ukraine who was toppled from power in February 2014 [7]. Mearsheimer claims that the regime change of 2014 in Ukraine was sponsored and engineered by the US as leading American policy makers were involved in Yanukovich's ouster [7]. In turn it was the last straw for Putin who subsequently annexed Crimea and since then he has sought to erode and dismantle Ukraine as a sovereign nation. The Kremlin has purposefully targeted and degraded Ukraine so that it would never become a Western satellite next to Russia.

Understanding Russia's behavior. Mearsheimer suggests that the Kremlin's reactions to events in Ukraine and Western interventions are influenced and guided not by parochial emotional interests but rather by legitimate concerns premised on historical experiences that Russia has had throughout its history [7]. He refers to the fact that Ukraine has always served as a buffer zone between Russia and Europe and thereby Russian leaders never tolerate a Ukraine hostile to Russia. Hence even if the West is averse to the Kremlin's behavior, it ought to understand the logic behind Moscow's position. After all Russia's position is not shaped and determined by ephemeral interests but by legitimate geopolitical concerns. By the same token the United States would not stand idly if China or another great power attempted to build an alliance in the Western hemisphere directed against Washington. In a similar fashion, the Kremlin on many occasions has warned the West that the expansion of NATO into former Soviet republics cannot be tolerated.

Mearsheimer believes that the analyses and assessment of Ukraine and Russia by Western policy makers and experts are fraught with wrong assumptions and fallacies, particularly in perceiving Russia as an enemy [7]. Seeing Russia as a formidable foe has pushed the West to strengthen its influence over Ukraine which is a grave mistake according to Mearsheimer. In fact, Russia is not a growing power, argues Mearsheimer, rather it is a declining power. Russian behavior, therefore, is not offensive but first and foremost defensive in its nature as it is seeking to deter the West's expansion into Ukraine. Furthermore, unlike the West that subscribes to liberal ideas about international relations, Russia is acting according to the logic of realism and realpolitik [7]. Despite raising concerns in Russia regarding growing

influence of the West in Ukraine, especially with respect to NATO eastward expansion, Western nations have failed to grasp the fact that their agenda has laid the foundation for a conflict in eastern Europe by provoking Russia to launch military aggression against Ukraine.

In the US and Europe liberals have had the upper hand in all important areas, including security. These liberals consider the US to be an exceptional, indispensable and benign nation that should not be seen as a threat in Russia. From this view, the US actions are regarded as benevolent and are intended to bring democracy, stability and prosperity to the rest of the world. As liberalism has become a new faith amongst Western elites, they are deeply convinced that the liberal order is increasingly threatened by the conventional authoritarian worldview represented by Russia, China and other powers. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 was seen by US leaders as an old-fashioned behavior dominated in the 19th and 20th centuries [9]. Likewise, Western elites tend to place the blame upon Putin for the Ukrainian crisis depicting him as irrational and a modern-day Hitler who is obsessed with resurrecting the Soviet Union. So the logic behind this argument is that the West should not seek to mollify Putin by striking a deal with him as the history repeats itself, the appeasement of Hitler led to the global catastrophe. Hence, in order to contain Putin, the West should encourage Ukraine to join NATO. Yet Mearsheimer claims that such assumptions are baseless as the capabilities of Russia are overexaggerated and do not reflect reality on the ground [7]. Having limited capacity, Russia is unable to subdue the whole Ukraine because the weakness of Russian army will not allow Moscow to pacify Ukraine. Moreover, any attempt to conquer Ukraine will trigger the fierce resistance of the Ukrainian people to Russian military invasion. Besides, Russia's weak economy will not be able to grapple with Western sanctions that would be imposed as a response to eventual military aggression against Ukraine. It should be mentioned that the experience in the 1979-1989 Afghanistan war has shown that any attempt to achieve the goal through military force would inevitably result in failure.

The resolution of the Ukraine crisis. Despite the Western recalcitrance to acknowledge Russia's legitimate security concerns, none of NATO members, including the US is not willing to resort to military force to defend Ukraine from Russian aggression. Instead, they prefer to provide military and financial assistance to Ukraine and impose harsh sanctions upon Russia to compel it to halt its military aggression against Ukraine. In Mearsheimer's view, such measures will have little effect and will not coerce Russia into changing its behavior [7]. Despite tough Western sanctions, Russia will withstand them and will keep defending its vital national interests.

From this perspective, Mearsheimer suggests that the Ukraine crisis can be resolved peacefully [7]. Yet to do so the West ought to alter its attitude towards both Ukraine and Russia. First and foremost, Mearsheimer calls for the abandonment of Western strategy to westernize and democratize Ukraine, instead the creation of a neutral Ukraine that would serve as a buffer zone between Russia and Europe must be a major focus. Western elites ought to understand that there cannot be an anti-Russian government in Ukraine instead the focus must be on establishing an

independent Ukraine that should be neither pro-Western nor pro-Russian. In Mearsheimer's opinion, ruling out a plan to integrate Ukraine into NATO should be made public by Western countries.

Economic development of a neutral Ukraine should be assisted by all stakeholders, including the US, the EU, Western financial institutions, and Russia. In addition to that, the West should quit its endeavor to bring liberal democracy to Ukraine and engineer regime change. To reify this plan the EU and the US ought to convince Ukraine to ensure the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities in the country, especially Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine.

There is a belief provided that the US changes its policy towards Ukraine, it may undermine the US image in the eyes of other countries. Yet Mearsheimer indicates that the current policy is a mistake, and the US needs to learn from its errors and strive to rectify the situation. In addition, Mearsheimer points out that the very idea that Ukraine has the right to decide its fate is also a serious mistake as an abstract notion such as self-determination becomes meaningless when great powers get involved in the process. Even if it is up to Ukraine to decide whether seek NATO membership or not, NATO member states do have the right to reject Ukraine's request to join the alliance.

Most importantly, as Mearsheimer asserts, Ukraine does not represent strategic importance for the US and the EU. Likewise, other members of NATO are not eager to defend Ukraine if it is attacked by Russia, and there is a growing tension within the Western world regarding Russia and Ukraine. Not all members of the EU and NATO support an idea of punishing Russia and assisting Ukraine. Furthermore, relations between Russia and the US are not strictly confined to Ukraine and go beyond Europe. Mearsheimer draws attention to strategic significance of Moscow-Washington cooperation as the latter needs Russian assistance more in vital areas of the globe such as the Middle East and South Asia, especially Russian help is needed by the US in dealing with growing influence of Beijing. Yet the current US policy is laying the groundwork for rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing. Thus, the West has a dilemma, either it may maintain the current policy directed at assisting Ukraine, which in turn will only aggravate and escalate hostilities with Moscow and will damage Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, or the West in cooperation with Russia can focus on building a neutral and prosperous Ukraine.

Conclusion

The study has focused on an analysis and assessment of John Mearsheimer's views on the Ukrainian crisis from the perspective of structural realism that allow for a deeper understanding and gaining insights into the power struggle over Ukraine with the involvement of great powers such as the US, the EU and Russia. Despite the preponderance of liberal paradigm in international relations theory, Mearsheimer offers compelling evidence and explanation of key international events and geopolitical processes. Drawing upon realist assumptions Mearsheimer explains that despite the predominance of liberalism, today great powers still act, behave and react to concrete events according to the realist logic. In this sense, he argues that the blame for the Ukrainian crisis ought not to be placed solely on the Kremlin because

Russia's aggressive behavior has been prompted by NATO expansion into Ukraine and the West's endeavor to spread democracy and install a pro-Western regime in Kiev.

The Ukrainian crisis started due to the nation's choice to join the EU and Russia's annexation of Crimea and backing Russian separatists in eastern and southern parts of the country. Since the onset of this international crisis there has been incessant ongoing debates about its inner dynamics and influence of outsiders. In the US and other Western nations there are dominant official narratives and discourses about this crisis. On the one hand, they consider it to be a moral commitment of the West to lend a hand to Ukraine in its aspirations to join NATO and the EU. On the other hand, they feel obliged to contain and counter Russian aggression against Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Armed with liberal ideas of international politics the West gives a top priority to the spread of liberal democracy in Ukraine and establishing a pro-Western regime in Kiev even if it induces Russian military aggression. In this sense, the West sees Russia as the main source of trouble and places the blame on Moscow for the Ukrainian crisis and war.

Yet besides mainstream discourses about the Ukraine crisis, there are alternative views and narratives regarding this matter, which reflected in the views of a leading American political scientist John Mearsheimer. As opposed to dominant discourses, Mearsheimer's key argument lies in a proper understanding and explaining the root causes of this crisis from the perspective of political realism. As a leading scholar of the school of political realism in international politics, Mearsheimer argues that unlike Western countries, Russia adheres to realism and realpolitik. In this case, blaming only Russia for this international crisis is groundless and unjust, since first and foremost policies of the US and the EU have eventually provoked Russia into playing hardball and invading Ukraine. By unilaterally imposing and promoting its values and liberal democracy in Ukraine and disregarding Russia's core interests in this matter, the West has triggered this international crisis. Thus, unlike many analysts in the West who back the West's policy towards Ukraine, Mearsheimer develops alternative views about this crisis that explain current processes from the perspective of political realism.

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ДЖОН МИРШАЙМЕРДІҢ РЕАЛИЗМІ ЖӘНЕ УКРАИН ДАҒДАРЫСЫ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала қазіргі кезеңдегі Украин дағдарысы төңірегінде Америка мен өзге Батыс елдерінің академиялық орталарында орын алып жатқан пікір-таластарды зерттеуге арналған. Мақалада белгілі американдық ғалым Джон Миршаймердің Ресейдің Украинаға қарсы әскери агрессиясына қатысты Батыстың көзқарасы мен ұстанымын түсіндіруі талданады. 2014 жылы Ресей Қырымды аннексиялағаннан кейін Джон Миршаймердің жариялаған «Неге Украин дағдарысы Батыстың қателігі» эссесі мен өзге де еңбектерін сыни тұрғыдан талдау бұл дағдарыс үшін Путинді кінәлау және Ресейді қаралау

Батыстағы негізгі үстем етуші көзқарас екенін көрсетті. Осы дағдарыстың өршуі жағдайында Джон Миршаймер Батыстағы мұндай нарративтер мен дискурстардың бір жақты екенін атап өтіп, Украинадағы жанжалдың туындауына АҚШ-тың жетекшілігіндегі Батыс елдері кінәлі екенін алға тартты. Джон Миршаймердің пікірінше Украинадағы жанжалдың туындауына 1990-шы жылдардан бері үздіксіз жүріп келе жатқан НАТО-ның шығыс бағытта кеңею үрдісі түрткі болды, өйткені Кремль НАТО-ның кеңеюін Ресейдің ұлттық қауіпсіздігіне төнген зор қатер ретінде бағалады. Бұған қоса Батыс елдері лидерлерінің халықаралық қатынастардағы қате теориялар мен парадигмаларды ту етіп көтеруі Батыс пен Ресей арасындағы қайшылықтардың тереңдеуіне түрткі болды. Нақты айтқанда, Батыс лидерлерінің трансатлантикалық қауіпсіздік мәселесінде либерализм парадигмасын басшылыққа алуы көптеген қателіктерге алып келді. Джон Миршаймердің Украина дағдарысы мен еуропалық қауіпсіздікке байланысты реалистік көзқарастары Батыста жетекші үстем етуші парадигмаға айналмаса да, ғалымның реализмге негізделген теориялары халықаралық мәселелерді дұрыс түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

Тірек сөздер: реализм, либерализм, Миршаймер, дағдарыс, Украина, НАТО, Батыс, Ресей

РЕАЛИЗМ ДЖОНА МИРШАЙМЕРА И УКРАИНСКИЙ КРИЗИС

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Аннотация. Статья рассматривает продолжающиеся дебаты вокруг украинской войны в американской и западной науке, особое внимание уделяется взглядам Джона Миршаймера на восприятие и отношение Запада к военному вторжению России в Украину. Углубленный критический анализ эссе Миршаймера под названием «Почему в украинском кризисе виноват Запад», опубликованного после российской аннексии Крыма в 2014 году, и других его работ показал, что возложение вины на президента В.Путина и демонизация России за Украинский кризис является доминирующим и преобладающим дискурсом на Западе. В этих продолжающихся дебатах Джон Миршаймер стремится изменить такие нарративы, считая их односторонними и предвзятыми, решительно и убедительно утверждая, что западные страны во главе с Соединенными Штатами виноваты в этом международном кризисе, который привел к военному конфликту в Украине. Основная причина украинского конфликта, по мнению Миршаймера, заключается в расширении НАТО на восток с 1990-х годов, которое Россия рассматривает как серьезную угрозу своей национальной безопасности. Другая причина существования острой напряженности между Западом и Россией, заключается в том, что взгляды американских и европейских лидеров на международную политику формируются и направляются ошибочным мнением, согласно которому они склонны принижать политический реализм, одновременно присоединяясь к либеральной школе в теории международных отношений, которая доминирует в дискурсе о трансатлантической безопасности. Хотя реалистическая позиция и взгляды Миршаймера на украинскую войну и европейскую безопасность не составляют основного дискурса на Западе, они способствуют правильному пониманию этого международного кризиса с точки зрения реализма.

Ключевые слова: реализм, либерализм, Миршаймер, кризис, Украина, НАТО, Запад, Россия

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